



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Kevin Kerstein
Publicity Manager
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(610) 420-6971 (mobile)
(502) 635-4712 (office)
Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com

LOCALLY-BASED HANDICAPPERS, TRAINERS GIVE BELMONT STAKES SELECTIONS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, June 7, 2019) – Racing’s third jewel of the Triple Crown, the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I), is set for Saturday. Locally-based handicappers and horsemen weighed in on the 1 ½-mile “Test of Champions.”

- TwinSpires.com Handicapper **Ed DeRosa**: “In a Kentucky Derby prep and Triple Crown season when this group has run competitive in the 95-100 Brisnet.com Speed Rating range, I am looking for a horse in the Belmont Stakes who is capable of a breakthrough number at a price and landed on Master Fencer as that possibility. His suck up seventh (placed sixth) in the Kentucky Derby portends that move forward five weeks later, and we’ll get the right price.”
- Trainer **Tim Glyshaw**: “I think War of Will is the one to beat off his recent form. He should be able to get the distance, too. If I were to use any other horse in the race, maybe (Mark) Casse’s other one, (Sir Winston) could run well with his pedigree. Also, Bourbon War seems like he could like the 1 ½-mile distance with his pedigree.”
- Trainer **Chris Hartman**: “Tacitus for me.”
- Jockey Agent **Steve Krajcir**: “I’m sticking to my guns on this one and going with War of Will.”
- Churchill Downs Handicapper **Joe Kristufek**: “Sir Winston finished best of all in the Tampa Bay Derby and I’m not going to hold the Blue Grass clunker over an extremely biased race track against him. The second in the Peter Pan was his breakout race and I think (Joel) Rosario is a great fit. The risk should be worth the potential reward.”
- Trainer **Paul McGee**: “Tacitus was one of the horses I liked for Derby and I think he could run a big race in the Belmont.”
- Brisnet.com Handicapper **James Scully**: “Spinoff ran big when second in the Louisiana Derby but was a race short entering the Kentucky Derby in my estimation. He’ll move forward significantly off the experience for three-time Belmont Stakes winner Todd Pletcher and should get the right trip with his tactical speed in a field lacking pace.”
- Bet America Handicapper **Scott Shapiro**: “Tacitus will not provide much value at the window on Saturday, but he appears the most talented horse, as well as the one likeliest to appreciate the mile-and-a-half distance. The Juddmonte Farms homebred should sit a nice mid-pack trip and out-finish this group to capture the third leg of the 2019 Triple Crown.”

CHURCHILL DOWNS CONNECTIONS SET FOR A BIG WEEKEND AT BELMONT PARK – Several locally-based connections are in Elmont, N.Y. this weekend for Belmont Park’s “Racing Festival” centered around the third jewel of the Triple Crown, the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I).

The \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) features five Kentucky Derby alumnae: **Juddmonte Farms’ Tacitus** ridden by **Jose Ortiz** and trained by **Bill Mott** (third); **Katsumi Yoshizawa’s Master Fencer** ridden by **Julien Leparoux** and trained by **Koichi Tsunoda** (sixth); **Gary Barber’s War of Will** ridden by **Tyler Gaffalione** and trained by **Mark Casse** (seventh); **R A Hill Stable** and **Reeves Thoroughbred Racing’s Tax** ridden by **Irad Ortiz Jr.** and trained by **Danny Gargan** (14th); and **Wertheimer and Frere’s Spinoff** ridden by **Javier Castellano** and trained by **Todd Pletcher** (18th).

Also in the field is locally-based Preakness (GI) runner-up **Everfast** – owned by **Calumet Farm** and ridden by **Luis Saez** for trainer **Dale Romans**.

Fans are invited to watch the 151st running of the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) Saturday on Churchill Downs’ massive Big Board. The 13-race program at Belmont is a stakes bonanza with 10 overall, including six Grade I events. The action begins at 11:35 a.m. so Churchill Downs will open its admission gates early at 11:15 a.m. NYRA has three guaranteed wagering pools Saturday: a \$500,000 Pick 5 (Races 1-5); \$500,000 Pick 6 (Races 6-11 ending with the Belmont Stakes); and \$1.5 million Pick 4 (Races 8-11).

The pomp of the Belmont Park action will be featured prominently at Churchill Downs on Saturday with the simulcast of the 1 ½-mile Belmont Stakes scheduled for 6:37 p.m. – which comes after the final live race at 5:58 p.m. Video and audio of a majority of the stakes races from Belmont will be shown between races on the track’s massive Big Board when they don’t conflict with live action.

Joel Politi’s Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) winner **Serengeti Empress** returns to action in the \$700,000 Acorn (GI) for locally-based trainer **Tom Amoss**. Also entered in the Acorn is Churchill Downs-based **Bell’s the One** for trainer **Neil Pessin** and jockey **Corey Lanerie**. The daughter of Majesticperfection finished second in the Eight Belles (GII) on Kentucky Oaks Day.

Pat Day Mile (GIII) third **Dream Maker** returns to action in the \$150,000 Easy Goer for Casse. Leparoux has the call from post No. 2.

Longines Distaff Turf Mile (GII) winner **Beau Recall** is set to take on seven-time winner **Rushing Fall** in the \$700,000 Just a Game (GI) for trainer **Brad Cox**. Also entered in the Just a Game is Longines Distaff Turf Mile runner-up **Got Stormy** and third-place finisher **Daddy Is a Legend**.

In the \$700,000 Ogden Phipps (GI), Churchill Downs-based **Midnight Bisou** is the even-money favorite in the field five for Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen**.

In the \$400,000 Jaipur, locally-based **Wild Shot** is 30-1 on the morning line for trainer **Rusty Arnold II**.

Pat Day Mile runner-up **Hog Creek Hustle** will cut back in distance for the seven-furlong, \$400,000 Woody Stephens (GI) for trainer **Vickie Foley**.

The \$1.2 million Metropolitan Handicap (GI) features Alysheba (GII) winner **McKinzie** along with Churchill Downs Stakes (GI) winner **Mitole** and third-place finisher **Promises Fulfilled**.

Old Forester Turf Classic (GI) winner **Bricks and Mortar** is the 7-5 morning line favorite in the \$1 million Manhattan (GI).

The stakes bonanza concludes in Race 13 with the 1 ½-mile Brooklyn Invitational (GII) with inaugural Champions Day Marathon winner **Sonneteer**.

Several locally-based jockeys will be at Belmont Park Saturday: **Tyler Baze**, Gaffalione, Lanerie, Leparoux, and **Ricardo Santana Jr.**

NBCSN will air action from Belmont Park from 2-4 p.m. Belmont Stakes action shifts to **NBC** from 4-7 p.m.

Guests at Churchill Downs will have an opportunity to enjoy New York-themed food offerings in select dining rooms and concession stands, including chicken parmesan sliders. Also, **Levy Restaurants** will sell the Belmont Jewel – the official drink of the Belmont Stakes (includes Woodford Reserve, lemonade, pomegranate juice and orange zest). Last call for drinks on Saturday will be “Call to the Post” for the Belmont Stakes, and all dining rooms will remain open through the big race

Advance wagering on Saturday’s Belmont Stakes will be offered all day Friday at Churchill Downs.

Five stakes races are carded Friday at Belmont’s 11-race program, including the \$600,000 New York (GII) for fillies and mares at 1 ¼ miles on the inner turf and \$400,000 Belmont Gold Cup Invitational (GIII) for 4-year-olds and up at two miles on the Widener Turf Course. The two races go as Races 9 and 10 at 5:15 p.m. and 5:48 p.m., respectively, and will be televised on **NBCSN** from 5-6 p.m.

Similar to Churchill Downs’ popular Oaks/Derby Double, the New York Racing Association (NYRA) will offer a pair of two-day doubles: the New York/Manhattan Double, which has a \$100,000 guarantee, and the \$300,000 guaranteed Belmont Gold Cup/Belmont Stakes Double. There is also a \$500,000 guaranteed Late Pick 4 from Belmont on Races 8-11.

New for 2019, the Belmont Stakes Festival Pick 6 will span Friday-Saturday with a 20-cent minimum wager and 15 percent takeout. The sequence will begin Friday in Race 8 with the \$250,000 True North (GII) and the Belmont Gold Cup and continue Saturday with the Woody Stephens, Metropolitan Handicap, Manhattan and the Belmont Stakes.

STAVE TO SCRATCH FROM SATURDAY’S MINT JUELP IN FAVOR OF FRIDAY ALLOWANCE – Hinkle Farms’ Stave will scratch from Saturday’s 43rd running of the \$125,000 Old Forester Mint Julep (Grade III) in favor of a one-mile allowance event Friday.

The Old Forester Mint Julep, a 1 1/16-mile test over the Matt Winn Turf Course, has been carded as Race 10 on Saturday’s 11-race program with a post time of 5:26 p.m. (all times Eastern).

The Mint Julep features 4-year-old filly **Limari** who will attempt to notch trainer **Brad Cox**’s second victory in the race in four years. Cox won the 2016 edition of the Old Forester Mint Julep with **Richard** and **Bertram Klein**’s **Cash Control**. Limari will be in search of her fifth-consecutive victory as the 5-2 morning line favorite.

The complete field for the Old Forester Mint Julep from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Coco Channel** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Charlie LoPresti, 30-1); **Smart Emma** (Declan Cannon, Danny Peitz, 8-1); **Mom’s On Strike** (Adam Beschizza, Joe Sharp, 7-2); **She’s Pretty Lucky** (Miguel Mena, Eddie Kenneally, 8-1); **Vagabond Princess** (Chris Landeros, Kelsie Calvo, 12-1); **Smart Shot** (Edgar Morales, Rusty Arnold II, 8-1); Limari (Geroux, Cox, 5-2); Stave (scratched); **Promise of Spring** (Gabriel Saez, Steve Margolis, 10-1); and **Phantom Opening** (James Graham, Jordan Blair, 8-1). All horses will carry 120 pounds with the exception of Smart Shot who will tote 122.

STAKES PROBABLES – Next Saturday's **Downs After Dark Presented by Budweiser** 11-race program is highlighted by the \$600,000 Stephen Foster Presented by GE Appliances (GII) and \$250,000 Fleur de Lis Presented by Budweiser (GII). Both races are part of the Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In" Challenge Series. The winner of the Stephen Foster receives an automatic berth to the Nov. 2 Breeders' Cup Classic while the Fleur de Lis victor receives a starting gate spot in the Breeders' Cup Distaff.

Along with the Stephen Foster and Fleur de Lis, the 11-race card offers three other graded stakes events for Thoroughbreds. Below are the known probable entrants for all five races, according to Churchill Downs assistant racing secretary and stakes coordinator **Dan Bork**:

- **\$600,000 Stephen Foster (Grade II), 3-year-olds and up, 1 1/8 miles, 38th running**
Probable (with trainer): Alkhaatam (Danny Peitz); Draft Pick (Peter Eurton); King Zachary (Graham Motion); Quip (Rodolphe Brisset); Seeking the Soul (Dallas Stewart); Thirstforlife (Wes Hawley); Tom's d'Etat (Al Stall Jr.); and Yoshida (JPN) (Bill Mott)
- **\$250,000 Fleur de Lis (Grade II), fillies and mares, 1 1/8 miles, 44th running**
Probable (with trainer): Auspicious Babe (Dallas Stewart); Blue Prize (ARG) (Ignacio Correias IV); Elate (Bill Mott); Red Ruby (Kellyn Gorder); She's a Julie (Steve Asmussen); and Skeptic (Rusty Arnold II)
- **\$250,000 Wise Dan (Grade II), 3-year-olds and up, 1 1/16 miles on turf, 30th running**
Probable (with trainer): Admission Office (Brian Lynch); Bourbon Resolution (Ian Wilkes); First Premio (Mark Casse); Mr. Misunderstood (Brad Cox); Parlor (Eddie Kenneally); and Siem Riep (Ben Colebrook)
- **\$150,000 Matt Winn (Grade III), 3-year-olds, 1 1/16 miles, 22nd running**
Probable (with trainer): Armistice Day (Tommy Drury); Knicks Go (Ben Colebrook); Mr. Money (Bret Calhoun); and Signalman (Kenny McPeck).
- **\$150,000 Regret (Grade III), 3-year-old fillies, 1 1/8 miles on turf, 50th running**
Probable (with trainer): Fortunate Girl (Mark Casse); La Feve (FR) (Graham Motion); Princesa Carolina (Kenny McPeck); She'sonthewarpath (Steve Margolis); and Winter Sunset (Wayne Catalano)

DOWN THE STRETCH – Racing continues Friday at Churchill Downs with a first post of 12:45 p.m. There is a \$57,364 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot that kicks off in Race 4 at 2:13 p.m. ... Join Churchill Downs Racetrack's **Darren Rogers** and **Kevin Kerstein** for a special episode of "Inside Churchill Downs" from trainer **Dallas Stewart's** crawfish boil Friday at 6 p.m. on **ESPN 680/105.7**. Those outside the Louisville area can listen live online at <http://www.espnloouisville.com/> or download a podcast of the show after its completion. ... Churchill Downs has a special **Stakes & Eggs** brunch in the Stakes Room on Sunday for \$45. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets.

-END-